Maintaining Healthy Volleyball Shoulders

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There are many exercises a volleyball player can include in their training to strengthen the volleyball hitting shoulder.

Why is the Shoulder of the Volleyball Player Vulnerable to Injury?

Shoulder mobility and stability

The shoulder joint is designed for maximum mobility to allow for a wide range of upper body movements to take place. This wide range of mobility comes at the expense of shoulder stability.

Instability of the shoulder joint may also materialize due to the tolerance of the supporting ligaments and weaknesses in the surrounding muscle groups.

The glenohumeral joint (main shoulder joint) is designed to allow a great amount of shoulder mobility, which results in a great potential for shoulder instability.
With such a great potential for instability, it's no wonder the bones and muscles of the volleyball player shoulder are a commonly injured area.

**Improving Shoulder Stability for the Volleyball Player**

**Push ups may be the answer for improved shoulder function.**

By performing exercise variations of the push up, you can improve the function of serratus anterior muscle (an often weak upward rotator).

Push ups on a medicine ball or physioball...

Performing push ups on an unstable surface increases the involvement of the triceps as a shoulder stabilizer.

Performing push ups on an unstable surface increases the involvement of the rectus abdominus in stabilizing the body’s core.

**Push up variations train multi-directional stability of the shoulder.**

The volleyball player needs to prepare for the shock that occurs at the shoulder joint from the many swings the hitter makes throughout the season.

Each time a volleyball player swings and contacts the volleyball, that's one more repetition that needs to be balance with good shoulder stability.

When designing a volleyball weight training program exercises should be considered for preparing for each of those impacts on the shoulder.

Here are some push up variations a volleyball player can do to improve stability at the shoulder.
Offset Push Up

Push up variations performed on a medicine ball train mult-directional stability of the shoulder.

Purpose:
Improve activation, strength, and stability of the shoulder muscles.

Starting Position:
Get in a basic push up position (on toes, stomach tight and in a line with upper back and hips) with arms extended at shoulder width. Place the ball underneath your right hand.

Action:
Slowly lower down your body until your chest is at the same height as the ball. Return to the starting position and repeat for the desired number of repetitions. Switch hands and repeat the exercise.

Coaching cues:
Vary the speed of movement and number of repetitions depending on your training goals.
**Medicine Ball Tricep Push Up**

The medicine ball tricep push up works mainly the triceps while also training mult-directional shoulder stability.

**Purpose:**
Improve activation, strength, and stability of the shoulder muscles. Also, increase strength in the chest, triceps, and the trunk muscles.

**Starting Position:**
Get in a basic push up position (on toes, stomach tight and in a line with upper back and hips) with arms extended at shoulder width. Place the ball on the ground between your hands.

**Action:**
Place both of your hands on top of the ball. Lower your body slowly while keep your body straight. Lower as far as possible. Return to the starting position and repeat the exercise.

**Coaching cues:**
Maintain correct body position throughout the movement.
**Medicine Ball Walk About**

The walk-about trains multi-directional shoulder stability. The advantage of the walk-about is the movement is more dynamic which results in a better plyometric effect of training.

**Purpose:**
Improve activation, strength, and stability of the shoulder muscles.

**Starting Position:**
Get in a basic push up position (on toes, stomach tight and in a line with upper back and hips) with arms extended at shoulder width. Place the ball underneath your right hand.

**Action:**
Shift your weight onto your right hand and then place your left hand onto the ball as well. The ball should now be directly under your chest. Supporting your body weight with your left hand, place your right hand on the ground. Repeat the movement in the opposite direction. Repeat the walking of your hands back and forth for the desired number of repetitions.

**Coaching cues:**
Hand touches should be quick to the ground and across the ball for more of a plyometric effect.
**Physioball Push Up Plus**

A challenging exercise for shoulder stability and core strength.

**Purpose:**
Improve activation, strength, and stability of the shoulder muscles. Also, increase strength in the chest, triceps, and the trunk muscles.

**Starting Position:**
Get in a basic push up position with your hands on the physioball and your fingers pointed out to the sides. Shoulder blades should be pushed away from one another, as far forward as possible.

**Action:**
Brace your core and lower yourself to where your chest almost touches the ball. Control the ball as you push back up. Try to get as far away from the ball as possible.

**Coaching cues:**
Keep your body in a straight line throughout the movement. The medicine ball and physioball push ups may be good exercises to include in volleyball weight training because they provide an unstable surface for training shoulder strength and stability.
If a volleyball player can’t perform these exercises correctly, they more than likely don't have adequate stability shoulder strength.

**Shoulder External Rotation & the Volleyball Player**

Injuries to the shoulder are common to athletes who perform repetitive overhead actions.

The rotator cuff muscles must activate to stabilize the head of the humerus in the gluneohumeral joint.

There are 4 rotator cuff muscles...

- supraspinatus
- infraspinatus
- teres minor
- subscapularis

The external rotators (infraspinatus and teres minor) may become weak as a result of the repetitive overhead motion of hitting a volleyball.

The external rotators are used mainly when...

**The arm is being brought back before the hit.** During the cocking phase of the volleyball player arm swing, the external rotators are contracting.

**The arm is being slowed down after the hit.** During the forward movement of a volleyball player arm swing, the external rotators are used eccentrically to slow down the arm, withstanding significant force.
Volleyball Player Exercises for External Rotation Strength

Standing Shoulder External Rotation

Strengthen the external rotators concentrically using a resistance band.

Purpose: 
Strengthening the external rotators with external rotation.

Starting Position: 
Grab the resistance tubing of the hand of the shoulder you are strengthening. Flex your elbow to 90 degrees. Position your hand so you are holding the tubing with your thumb pointed up.

Action: 
Externally rotate to 90 degrees by pulling the elastic tubing across your body keeping your elbow flexed to 90 degrees and your upper arm in line with your body.

Coaching cues: 
In this exercise you are basically pulling the band (externally rotating) from the left side of your body to your right (if you are exercising your right shoulder). The exercise should be performed with light resistance completing 1-2 sets of 25-30 repetitions.
Side Lying External Rotation

This exercise is essentially the same as the standing exercise except you’re using a weight instead of elastic tubing and you are lying on your side.

Purpose:
Strengthening the external rotators with external rotation.

Starting Position:
Grab a light dumbbell with your hand of the shoulder you are training. Lie on the side opposite the shoulder. Bend your elbow to 90 degrees.

Action:
Externally rotate your shoulder while keeping your elbow bent at 90 degrees and your upper arm resting on your side.

Coaching cues:
The exercise should be performed with light weight completing 1-2 sets of 25-30 repetitions.

Horizontal Abduction with External Rotation

This exercise is a progression of the standing external rotation and side lying external rotation exercises.

Purpose:
A more challenged exercise for strengthening the external rotators.

Starting Position:
Grab a dumbbell and lie prone (face down) on a table or bench. With your arm straight, move your arm to 90 degrees of horizontal abduction.

Action:
Externally rotate the shoulder.
Coaching cues:
The exercise should be performed with light weight completing 1-2 sets of 25-30 repetitions.

**Shoulder External Rotation 90-90**

As the strength of the external rotators gets stronger, strength can be challenged with the arm positioned in elevated positions.

**Purpose:**
A more challenged exercise for strengthening the external rotators.

**Starting Position:**
Stand with your shoulder abducted to 90 degrees and elbow flexed to 90 degrees. Start with your shoulder rotated in a neutral position (palm facing down).

**Action:**
Perform the exercise by externally rotating the shoulder to 90 degrees.

**Coaching cues:**
Your arm and shoulder should maintain this 90-90 position throughout the movement.

**Eccentric 90-90**

As the strength of the external rotators gets stronger, strength can be challenged with the arm positioned in elevated positions.

**Purpose:**
To train the shoulder external rotators eccentrically to develop strength to help control the speed of internal rotation (strength to help slow down the arm swing after hitting).

**Starting Position:**
Stand in the same 90-90 position (shoulder rotated to a neutral position, palm facing down).
Action:
Perform the external rotation to 90 degrees. At this position, take a step back. Now, allow the shoulder to slowly internally rotate to the neutral position.

Coaching cues:
The speed of the internal rotation should be slow and controlled.

"Are you serious about grabbing your athletic dreams and literally forcing them into reality?

My revolutionary volleyball strength program is used by everyday volleyball players to render teammates and coaches speechless..."

Click here for more info…

- This program includes a multitude of exercises designed to work with whatever equipment you do or don’t have available!

- Warm up exercises that start your workout right and help get you the results you want.

- Proper warm up routines that get your team ready to win big games.

- Prehab shoulder exercises for strengthening the volleyball shoulder and help keep the shoulder healthy.

- Exercises that work the scapula stabilizers... key to healthy shoulders.
• Explosive shoulder exercises that drastically improves hitting power.

• The right lower body exercises important for improving athletic leg strength and power.

• Less technical lower body exercises that aren't as difficult to learn.

• Single leg exercises critical for improving volleyball leg strength and jumping power.

• Explosive lower body exercises to increase volleyball jumping power.

• Exercises that work powerful hip extension that's so critical to jumping high and hitting hard in volleyball.

• Exercises that you must do to work the core the right way for developing core strength and power for volleyball.

Click here for more info…

http://www.strength-and-power-for-volleyball.com/volleyball-training-programs.html
• Important core activation exercises that wake up muscles that immediately impact your jumping and hitting power.

• Exercises important for transferring energy through your body.

• The correct exercise order for training to increase speed, strength, power, and an explosive vertical jump.

• The correct program structure for training the right energy systems for volleyball.

• Correct exercise order for making massive gains in strength and power.

• Correct periodization that helps avoid overtraining and encourages continuous improvement in volleyball strength and performance.

• Training cycles critical to getting the results you want.

• Correct set rep scheme for volleyball strength training.

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